

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 3, 5, 7, 8 and 13 – 17 and 19 are pending in the present application. Claims 6 and 9 – 12 were previously canceled, and claims 4 and 18 are canceled by the present amendment.

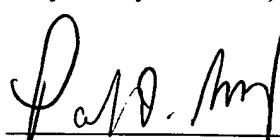
Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner indicates that claims 4, 5, 18 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The application contains two independent claims, namely claims 1 and 13. Rather than rewrite claims 4, 5, 18 and 19 in independent form, Applicants are (a) amending claims 1 and 13 to include allowable recitals previously presented in claims 4 and 18, respectively, and (b) canceling claims 4 and 18.

In the office action, claims 1 – 3, 7, 8 and 13 – 17 are rejected. As mentioned above, Applicants amended independent claims 1 and 13 to include allowable recitals previously presented in claims 4 and 18, respectively. Claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 depend from claim 1, and claims 14 – 17 depend from claim 13. Thus, all of claims 1 – 3, 7, 8 and 13 – 17 are now in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1 – 3, 7, 8 and 13 – 17.

Applicants amended claims 1 and 13 to include recitals that were previously presented in claims 4 and 18, respectively, and amended claims 5 and 19 to adjust their dependency. Applicants do not intend for any of these amendments to narrow the scope of any term of any of the claims, and therefore, submit that the doctrine of equivalents should be available for all of the terms of all of the claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record, and accordingly, request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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